

8-9-00

NSF SBIR/STTR Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

May 1-2, 2000

Arlington, VA

The NSF SBIR/STTR Advisory Committee met at NSF on May 1-2, 2000. Advisory Committee members in attendance included Dr. Walter Plosila (Chair), Dr. Paul McClure, Dr. Philip Singerman, Dr. Jose Zayas-Castro, Dr. Chris Bush, Mr. Milton Stewart, and Dr. Cardinal Ward.

May 1, 2000

Dr. Eugene Wong, Assistant Director for Engineering, commented on the pivotal role that the SBIR/STTR program plays in the mission of NSF.

Dr. Kesh Narayanan, Director, Industrial Innovation Programs, provided a progress report on the SBIR/STTR program as well as the actions that it taken on the recommendations from the Jan. 21- 22, 1999 Advisory Committee meeting.

Dr. Lewis Martin-Vega, Division Director, Design, Manufacturing and Industrial Innovation (DMII) shared his thoughts on strengthening university-industry relationships through the SBIR/STTR program. He noted that NSF Phase II awardees will participate in the annual DMII research conference in Jan 2001.

Dr. Kesh Narayanan at the SBIR/STTR staff briefed the committee on the Phase I grantees workshop; the early submission of financial information to accelerate the Phase II award process; the advantages and disadvantages of pre-award spending by potential Phase II award recipients; and the concept of zero-gap funding.

Ms. Cheryl Albus reviewed the highlights of the FastLane electronic information management process and its impact on the SBIR/STTR program.

Dr. John Hurt discussed the “ Partnerships in Innovation” program and its relationship to the SBIR/STTR program. The goal of the program is the enhancement of university/business interactions where the university views itself is a resource within its state.

Dr. Kesh Narayanan summarized the features of the pending SBIR/STTR congressional reauthorization; the SBIR outreach efforts; and the need for additional commercialization planning assistance for potential Phase II proposers. He also noted that there would be Committee of Visitors evaluation of the program in 2001.

May 2nd 2000

Advisory Committee Observations

The program is commended for its openness and integrity along with its efficiency and meeting the Phase I deadline for four consecutive years. The assistance in the use of FastLane; the outreach with EPSCoR; the Phase IIB initiative; the market orientation of its topics; and the integration of the review of SBIR/STTR proposals were highlighted.

Committee noted that the systematic outreach still needed to be enhanced particularly with newcomers to the program. The time between proposal submission and the receipt of funds and the competition for limited funds continue to be issues.

Recommendations

- Continue to solicit against the four major topics.**
- Proactively seek to shorten the cycle time by considering the receipt of all four topics twice a year or the receipt one topic per quarter.**
- Improve the access to SBIR/STTR information by putting the SBIR icon on the main NSF homepage and by providing more information on university/small-business collaborative opportunities**
- Continue to make FastLane more user friendly.**
- The integration of STTR with SBIR was commended. Funding levels should be increased \$150,000 for Phase I and \$750,000 for Phase II for STTR awards. An incentive should be provided for university/small-business collaboration.**
- Continue to balance evaluation criteria consistent with NSF policy in recommendation of proposals for award.**
- Permit reimbursement of legitimate pre-award cost for 90 days before the award (current policy permits this at the proposers risk without any time limit).**

- **Permit one re- submission at the next closing date for Phase II proposals that have been declined.**
- **Promote the Phase IIB program with potential capital sources as well as awardees**
- **Test the viability of a zero- gap option program with a small pilot study.**
- **SBIR evolvement is encouraged the Partners for Innovation program.**
- **Volunteers from the Advisory Committee for the 2001 Committee of Visitors are sought**
- **The SBIR/STTR program was requested to reconsider the inclusion of IR&D costs in the indirect cost calculation.**

In conclusion, the committee commended NSF for the continuous improvements they had made in the management of the SBIR/STTR program. The committee looks forward to continuing its involvement with the SBIR/STTR staff in support this most important program.

Walter H. Plosila, Chair